

# Maurice Hinchey NEWS

## 26<sup>TH</sup> CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT, NEW YORK

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### **HINCHEY EARMARKS \$500,000 FOR CAYUGA LAKE WATERSHED PROTECTION**

WASHINGTON - U.S. Representative Maurice Hinchey (NY-26) today announced that he has succeeded in placing \$500,000 into a federal spending bill for the protection of the Cayuga Lake Watershed. Hinchey earmarked the funds at the request of the Tompkins County Soil and Water Conservation District.

"Cayuga Lake is a valuable resource and the source of drinking water for many residents throughout the watershed," said Hinchey. "The state and federal governments have designated the lake as threatened and impaired. So it's important that we provide the funds to help protect the watershed."

The Cayuga Lake Watershed is the largest of all the Finger Lakes. Fifty-nine percent of the watershed's total acreage lies in Tompkins County. It is vulnerable to contamination from run-off as 34 percent of land use in the watershed is agriculture-related. The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation lists the lake and many of its tributaries as threatened for water supply on its priority list. Other tributaries are threatened for fish propagation and habitat. Cayuga Lake is also on the national list of impaired bodies in need of remediation. The earmarked funds would be used to implement Best Management Practices, both agricultural and non-agricultural, that have been identified in the Cayuga Lake Watershed Restoration and Protection Plan.

"These dollars will be a great contribution to the efforts to assure that this watershed remains a vital natural resource for generations to come," said Craig Schutt, Conservation District Manager for the Tompkins County Soil and Water Conservation District. "Abundant, clean water is one of the region's most important resources, something Congressman Hinchey is acutely aware of. We are very fortunate to be represented by such a consistently strong supporter of preserving and protecting our natural environment. He and his staff have been enthusiastic supporters of this proposal from the beginning."

A member of the House Appropriations Committee, Hinchey requested the funding be placed in the fiscal year 2003 spending bill that includes the Environmental Protection Agency. The bill was approved by the full committee with Hinchey's earmark intact earlier this week. The next step is consideration by the full House.